

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from California (Ms. LEE) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Ms. LEE addressed the House. Her remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. DOGGETT) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. DOGGETT addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Florida (Ms. CORRINE BROWN) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Ms. CORRINE BROWN of Florida addressed the House. Her remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from South Carolina (Mr. CLYBURN) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. CLYBURN addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Indiana (Ms. CARSON) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Ms. CARSON addressed the House. Her remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

HURRICANE KATRINA

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 4, 2005, the gentleman from New Mexico (Mr. PEARCE) is recognized for 30 minutes as the designee of the majority leader.

Mr. PEARCE. Mr. Speaker, we have seen unprecedented suffering in this Nation in the last weeks. No one in this country has been able to comprehend the size and scope of the destruction. To put it into perspective, one of my colleagues pointed out that the size of the area affected is the size of Wyoming. Another pointed out that the size of the area affected was equal to the nation of Great Britain. So as we talk about our failures and our successes, I think it is important that we really discuss Katrina in an overall view.

I know that from my perspective there are going to be three major challenges. We have to deal with the human suffering that is felt by every one of the families who have lost loved ones but also by those people who are displaced. So the human suffering in terms of jobs lost and regaining jobs of any sort, regaining an income in order to pay for current expenses, some way to access the safety nets that this Nation is providing, that is one challenge of the problem.

The second challenge is rebuilding the entire gulf coast region, and that is going to be a long and arduous task and one that is going to require the dedication and commitment of the entire Nation.

But the third thing that I think we must be aware of as leaders and as the House of Representatives is the effect on our economy.

So tonight I am joined by the gentleman from Kentucky (Mr. DAVIS). We would like to discuss the effects of Katrina that we see and the things that we think the Nation should be aware of as we move into the days ahead. I would like to discuss some of the responses that we have seen and some that we have not seen.

But at this point, I yield to the gentleman from Kentucky (Mr. DAVIS) to talk about his perceptions of the disaster and the destruction that we have seen.

Mr. DAVIS of Kentucky. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding to me.

This tragedy is of grave proportions, as evidenced by the unprecedented meeting of the President's Cabinet here tonight. Mr. Speaker, who spent 3 hours with us discussing a wide range of responses from government agencies, of agencies of the State as well as the local level, but particularly looking at the response that was engendered by this.

I think the one thing that we can clearly say, looking at history, looking at this response and looking at others is there is no substitute for leadership and initiative, particularly on the front lines and in the local level; and there are countless stories of individuals and communities who rose to the occasion, ranging from mayors of small cities, pastors of churches, small business owners who all gave of themselves to make a tremendous difference, as the military and national response was able to come into an area that was devastated and largely inaccessible. I would point out that the response has been actually unprecedented in scale.

When we think about this, I would like to bring some perspective to my colleagues. No disaster, no natural disaster, has struck this Nation of the proportions that Hurricane Katrina has in terms of its devastation and its impact. Nearly 90,000 square miles were affected by this. That is an area approximately the size of Great Britain, approximately the size of the State of Wyoming. When we begin to look at that, I do not believe that there is any agency that had fully prepared or built the infrastructure for that level and certainly the city of New Orleans did not have the wherewithal, just the simple hydraulics and physics of it.

But the one thing that I want to point out is that people in neighborhoods rose to the occasion, individual citizens rose to the occasion. And many of my colleagues have risen to the occasion, abandoning the legislative role during that last week of the

recess, working in everything from relief positions to the gentleman from Louisiana (Mr. BOUSTANY), one of my colleagues, a physician, who helped in the start-up of hospitals, coordinating rescue operations from his district in Lafayette. I look at communities in the surrounding States and throughout the country who have responded with an incredible amount of magnanimity, of charity, of compassion, of love and outreach to see these people have a hope and an opportunity and a future.

In some ways, Mr. Speaker, I have to share candidly, as a former military professional, I was somewhat disappointed with some of the media coverage. I felt that it neglected many of the great works that were being performed by people in hidden places throughout the communities that were affected. Just as an aside, the Coast Guard rescued more people in the last week than four times what it would do in a typical year. That is simply remarkable, the ability to stage those resources in there and begin that response. When I look at the amount of rescues that have had to be performed for nearly 60,000 people who were trapped on rooftops and structures, public safety professionals, military professionals, National Guard resources from all over the United States are pouring in. Even before the storm hit, resources were being mustered around the United States, even from our own fourth district.

The day after the storm, I ran into early Tuesday morning a convoy of vehicles from our own Owen Electric Cooperative that had been on two prior hurricane responses and were on their way to lower Mississippi to the central staging area. There was a concerted response of private groups, of public groups coming together to deal with the tragedy whose magnitude no one could have imagined.

For a week now, we have watched the heartbreaking scenes of death and destruction in Mississippi, Alabama, and Louisiana. So many people left homeless, left without anything except the clothes they were wearing and one or two precious items that they could grab as the flood waters deluged their homes. As we grieve over this unimaginable horror, we have also watched in unmistakable awe ordinary people who have opened their hearts, their homes, their pocketbooks to these storm victims. Families who have little to spare themselves are taking in entire families of strangers simply because someone else is in need. This is the American way of selflessness and generosity. There is no ulterior motive, no agenda; and there is nothing but the simple desire to help, to lend a hand, to reinforce the dignity of every individual who is affected by this great tragedy.

The city of Houston, Texas, has done something unprecedented. And I point out that in the tsunami and in other disasters in other parts of the world no country, no people have ever responded with the level of outpouring of response of individuals to local, State